POINSETTIA CARE

Poinsettias should retain their beautiful color through the holidays with proper care.

Transporting
Poinsettia plants should not be exposed to cold temperatures. Poinsettia is best placed in a paper plant sleeve to protect the plant from the cold as well as to prevent it from breaking. If temperatures are well below freezing, all parts of the plant should be protected from the cold. Be sure to remove wrapping as soon as possible after bringing indoors. Remove wrapping from the bottom up to avoid damaging your plant.

Care
Choose an indoor location out of direct heat, cold drafts, and sunlight. Your poinsettia will not do well if placed in a busy entryway where doors are constantly opening. Be sure to keep your poinsettia away from windows because direct sunlight and cool temperatures can cause the foliage to wilt or drop. Cooler temperatures will prolong the bract color.

Check the soil daily and water when dry. If the pot is wrapped in foil or sits in a decorative container, remove it prior to watering. Be sure that your poinsettia never stands in water. If a poinsettia is kept as a gift plant, it is not necessary to fertilize or mist it.

Long-term Care
Most poinsettias are discarded after blooming is finished; however, if it will be kept as a houseplant, prune the plant down to approximately half its height, no lower than 6 inches. After new growth begins, a well-balanced fertilizer should be applied at least once during the active growing season. Plants can be placed outside in the summer in a partly shaded location, after all danger of frost. If plants grow too tall and leggy, they can be pinched back to encourage bushier growth. Poinsettias should be returned indoors before the threat of frost.

Rebloom
Encouraging a poinsettia to rebloom will require the plant to be placed where it will receive 12 to 14 hours of uninterrupted darkness each day starting in October for approximately 10 weeks. This can be accomplished by placing the plant in a closet or an unused room that will not receive light of any kind during the evening. During the day, the plant will need to be moved to a bright and sunny location.

Please contact Plant Information Service at 847.835.0972 or plantinfo@chicagobotanic.org for more information.